

MINSK *economic* NEWS

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Banker - a would-be Premier?

Down with the wicked wild West



The Government will often hold the West responsible for its failures. Yuri DRAKOHREST analyses the Government's recent anti-Western drive on the eve of the coming presidential elections.

The Central Election Commission's ruling on the validity of the signatures in support of candidates' registration has brought no radical changes into the campaign. However, one likely candidate, Mr. Gennady Karpenko has dropped out with only 97,472 signatures declared valid out of the 109,000 that he collected. His chances for a successful election were finally shattered by 9 people's deputies who withdrew their support from him at the last moment. With the deputies' move recognized as legitimate by the Central Election Commission, Karpenko has had to leave the race.

The two remaining opposition candidates - Belarusian Popular Front Leader Zenon Pozniak and ex-Speaker Stanislav Shushkevich have no intention of being courteous and considerate to each other in campaigning for the electorate's support, which means that competition between the two will soon start in earnest.

In its turn, the other political wing, largely dominated by the Prime Minister, appears to be deeply involved in sophisticated political manoeuvring. Apparently, the elections have exposed the marked left-wing slant of the Belarusian ruling class. Speaking at an electoral rally Vyacheslav Kebich pledged his allegiance to the Soviets. The last pretence was cast away in the Government's latest dealings with the press. With the television and radio under its permanent control the Government managed to regain its power over the national press by 1992. Of the few newspapers that rebelled, "Svaboda", a pro-opposition tabloid, has been causing the Government the worst headaches. This trouble-maker had already lost three expensive law suits to the Government Secretary Vladimir Zametalin when it ventured another daring publication which alleged the monetary union pusher's excessive propensity for alcohol abuse. Press-secretary Vladimir Zametalin reacted by making an angry statement in which the paper was accused of slandering the state authorities and the country's leaders. "Following the repeated requests by the public to react," said the Government press-secretary, "We intend to reconsider our relationship with the newspaper

to avoid further damage being done to stability in the country."

Recently, the Government was relieved of another embarrassment. "Belaruskaya Maladizhnaya", a Belarusian radio regular youth programme was closed down when it was about to broadcast a live interview with Stanislav Bogdankevich, the head of the Belarusian National Bank. Head producer of the programme Alena Radkevich was not even allowed into the studio.

Stanislav Bogdankevich, however, is a separate story. Bogdankevich had been reluctantly keeping in line with the government parties until early this May when he sharply criticised what Kebich regards as his main accomplishment - the agreement on monetary union with Russia. His statement was a considerable embarrassment to the Prime Minister. As a result, he was refused appearance in the morning news programme RADIO FACT. For similar reasons, BELARUSKAYA MOLODIOZHNYAYA was shut down to avoid further complications.

Kebich's split with Bogdankevich has demonstrated the weakness of his main asset, the monetary union, which has recently been taking most unlikely turns. A speedy exchange of the Belarusian into Russian currency is definitely out of the question. In addition, the pre-arranged mutual abolition of customs duties has been postponed until June 1. To escape embarrassment, the Government has taken on a traditionally Communist strategy - witchhunt. The target this time is the tricky West out to entrap and deceive the unsophisticated Belarusians and Slavs in general. The Soros-Belarus foundation has been chosen as the first test-bed for the new plan. Recently, the foundation has been confronted by a volley of accusations of subversive activities and other wrongdoings and haunted by numerous inspections, as part of what seems to be a covertly coordinated campaign. The Memorandum to Kebich by his press-secretary Gennady Danilov gave a detailed description of the harassment programme.

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Sergey GRITS According to Oleg Trusov, the Head of Stanislav Shushkevich's support group, the Chairman of the National Bank of the Republic of Belarus Stanislav BOGDANKEVICH has agreed to head the next Government if Mr Shushkevich should be elected President. Mr Bogdankevich has already spoken against the monetary union with Russia under the current conditions and supported the introduction of the republic's own currency.

Beasts versus "rabbit"

By Alexander BURDA

The poor "rabbit" has been brought to bay. While during the first three weeks of May the "rabbit" dropped a mere 9.5%, on the 18th a dramatic "rabbit" landslide began. The desperate attempts made by the National Bank did not save the day. Following the trading rounds on May 31 the dollar and the DM increased by over 10% and 25%, respectively. June has even "brighter" prospects in store: the new rate of BRB 30,000-35,000 to \$1.

The political situation in Belarus has had a powerful impact on the exchange rate. Apparently, the incompetent government has never neglected economic interests so openly as it has recently. The serious jabs at the National Bank and its chairman Stanislav Bogdankevich, the promises to stand a myriad of discounts and credits made by the Premier in his pre-election campaign (such as rent-freeze, new credits for the agro-industrial complex, etc.), and lastly, a BRB 500 bln credit obtained by the Council of Ministers to allegedly pay salaries to the budget employees - has caused rapid depreciation of the Belarusian rouble. On May 31 the dollar increased from BRB 21,700 to BRB 24,000 (by 10.9%), forcing the National Bank to suspend hard currency trading. However, the trade in DM is still active and promising.

Please see, Chief banker versus beasts page 2

Factories of Art Articles on show

By Vera RICH

The Central and Eastern Europe Technology and Investment Exhibition (CEETEX) in London's Earls Court exhibition centre last month was intended to be a showcase of investment opportunities for Western entrepreneurs, interested in taking a stake in the emerging markets of the former Soviet and socialist countries, including - in spite of the name - several of the Caucasian and Central Asian CIS republics. With several hundred exhibitors (over 600 from the Russian Federation alone and some 150 from Ukraine, it was one of the largest trade exhibitions devoted to a single area held in recent years). It was also, incidentally, the first time

that Belarus was represented at an exhibition in London for 15 years. In 1979, an exhibition of the Soviet Union (also at Earls Court) Belarus and Georgia were given especial prominence as "specimen" Soviet republics. On that occasion, to the best of my recollection, Belarus was represented primarily by folk-embroideries, tractors and portraits of the national poets, Janka Kupala and Jakub Kolas. In 1994, the poets had disappeared, and the folk-textiles reduced to a few items from what the catalogue somewhat oddly called the "Bobruysk Factory of Art Articles". But the heavy industry was still greatly in evidence. And, alas, in comparison with many neigh-

bouring countries, Belarus, to judge from its showing at CEETEX, has still a lot to learn about selling itself to the West.

The majority of the 33 exhibitors were the old Soviet "giants" with their tyres, pumps, automobiles, motor-bikes, capacitors, etc. This may not have been entirely the fault of the Belarusian side. A representative of the organizers (Sterling Exhibitions Ltd) told me that notifications of the exhibition had been sent to all firms and bodies whose addresses they happened to know. Doubtless many new entrepreneurs simply were not on their list. But the old guard (even if preparing for privatization) seemed to predominate. By their names (or rather their acronyms) we knew them: GOSKOMPROM and BELLESBUMPROM - the latter

causing paroxysms of stifled laughter among British visitors for whom it inevitably evoked the vulgar humour of traditional British seaside post-cards, with bathing BELLES with large BUMS, walking along the PROM(enade)!

The slowness of Belarus to privatize its industry would not necessarily have mattered so much, however, had the representatives of the yet-to-be-privatized sector been more attuned to the needs of those visiting the exhibition. Since this was, in essence a trade exhibition, with visitors either from the business community or the specialist press, exhibitors should have been more prepared to meet their requirements.

Please see, "I no speak English. Go away" page 2

A question of equality



Ludmila GRYAZNOVA went to great lengths in writing this article, conducting a special survey to assess the true level of sexual equality in Belarusian society.

The conclusions put forward in this article are based on statistical data and the results of the special survey. The survey included the views of some 142 Minsk residents, 51.4 per cent of whom were women and 48.6 per cent, men. For each of the areas of equality discussed below, participants of the survey were asked to assess the degree of equality between men and women on a ten-point basis, with a rating of 10.0 denoting absolute equality.

In terms of access to education, women fare on the whole better than their male counterparts in this country. Of all persons holding at least secondary vocational and higher education qualifications, 62 per cent are women. Likewise, more than half of the total current student population is comprised of women. In this regard, the degree of equality in this area is highest of all the criteria discussed in this article, with an equality rating of 8.8 points.

In terms of employment, statistics indicate an employment level among women of 85 to 90 per cent. However, this does not serve as a reliable indication of actual employment. In a planned economy, manpower is generally in short supply, and thus enterprises were often compelled to recruit as many people as possible onto their books. This statistic does not take into consideration the level of latent unemployment: in other words, women who are on the books and receive their wages, but who are actually not engaged in any sort of professional activity. The rationalisation of the Belarusian economy will doubtless lead to a higher level of unemployment among women. Public opinion puts the level of equality between men and women in the labour market vis-a-vis job opportunities at 6.0 points.

As concerns remuneration for one's toils, estimates provided by sociologists based on their statistics, a working woman's salary is roughly 80 per cent that of her male's counterpart for equal work. This relatively equitable salary arrangement is a remnant of the Soviet period where dogma and ideology attempted to achieve a level of egalitarianism and sexual equality. Accordingly, our survey of public opinion puts the level of equality in this area at 7.5 points.

In terms of career advancement opportunities, women are no better off today as they were in the past. Even in Soviet times, women oc-

cupied a mere 6 per cent of decision making positions. The pursuit of equality along party lines was ineffective. The problem of women's career promotion cannot be solved by the introduction of simple quotas, but by efforts to create equitable conditions for promotion.

There is scope for women to wield influence in political movements, and are to a large degree active in Belarusian political life. However, this assessment is based solely on a quantitative analysis. The actual contribution of women to the decision-making process is still questionable. The survey puts the level of equality between women and men in political life at 4.2 points.

Entrepreneurial activity is one sphere where women seem to be on a relatively strong footing. Women in this society are no newcomers to the game of turning a buck. Soviet society was rife with speculative activity in what was called the shadow economy, and women played a prominent role in this sphere. The degree of equality here, according to our survey, is some 6.3 points, as opposed to 5.0 vis-a-vis career opportunities and 4.2 in politics.

It will of course come as no surprise that women bear the brunt of the work around the house. This is the most revealing indicator of the patriarchal nature of Belarusian society. According to our survey, men are twice as passive when it comes to raising children (5.5 points) and of even less use when it comes to tidying up (4.4 points).

Not much can really be said about independent women's movements in this country. There are more than a dozen such movements in Belarus, but at this point it is still unclear as to the definition of their goals or political inclinations (socialist, liberal or radical extremist). This ambiguity is underscored by their methods and scope of activities.

To sum up, we can say that Belarusian women theoretically enjoy sexual equality. However, in reality, men are still much more equal, as was the case in the past. Realistically, there is little likelihood that these conditions will change in the near future.

This report has been filed within the framework of a project carried out by the Independent Institute for Socio-Economic and Political Studies (IIEPS).

Rumours and reality mixed

By Yuri DRAKORHUST

Continued from page 1

"The Foundation is using its privileged status to initiate a pro-Western development of the Republic and its state institutions, to create the basis for realizing the concept of an open society", wrote Gennady Davidov.

He went on, "I therefore recommend:

"- The Prosecutor's Office to evaluate the consistency of the Foundation's activities with the current legislation;

"- The Presidium of the Academy of Science to reconsider the cooperation of scientists with the International Fund for Science (supported by the Soros Foundation);

"- The Ministry of Education to rule on the legality of each of the Foundation's programmes individually.

"- The Ministry of Finance to carry out an inspection in early 1994 of the Foundation's financial activities."

Danilov's mighty programme is already being put into effect. During his visit to Minsk on May 24 George Soros was ignored by Vyacheslav Kebich, who later gave the reasons for his decision at a meeting with the metro builders in Minsk. "I will never meet with someone who seeks to make the republic poor". The cloud of mystery over the Prime Minister's

explanations was somewhat dispelled by a pro-government commentator, Ivan Antonovich, a former leader of the Russian Communist party. His appearance on television has lately been competing with the weather forecasts for regularity. He reproached George Soros with anti-communism and publicly requested the US charge d'affaires to send more political scientists and sociologists and fewer anti-communists.

Some observers maintain that the current anti-Western paroxysms in Belarus are a transient phenomenon which has to do primarily with the coming elections. It nevertheless carries a deeper message.

Belarusian politics is being increasingly dominated by forces with a markedly left-wing orientation. Promptly after Bogdankevich's criticism of the Monetary Union, the Pan Slavic Congress, a political organisation striving for a union of Slavic nations, accused Bogdankevich of nationalism and demanded his resignation. In a statement to the left-wing candidates they suggested agreeing on a single candidate supported by what they call "patriotic forces". The statement was addressed primarily to the Prime Minister, Head of Collec-

tive Farms Council Alexander Doubko, leader of the Communist Party Vasily Novikov and People's Deputy Alexander Lukashenko. Lukashenko does not mind offering Novikov and Doubko ministerial positions in his government, but wants to see Kebich in prison.

Similarly to Lukashevich, Pomiak can't wait to put Kebich in the clink. Such beligerent statements made by the candidates, have been producing ample rumours, some apparently having a grain of truth in them. Some speculate that if Kebich does not win outright, or drops out after the first round of voting, the failing of the next round will be arranged by securing a low turn-out. In this case Mechislav Gryb will temporarily act as the Head of State and will later become the most likely candidate for the presidency.

Alternatively, a violent solution is also considered possible. If the premier loses, tanks may be ordered out into the streets.

Recently, Belarus was shattered by a different kind of rumour. Ordinary manoeuvres by the civil defence were assumed to have been caused by an accident at Ignalina nuclear power station. Rumours, however absurd they may be, reflect the people's appreciation of their leaders' abilities.

138+ 145= ?

Twice a year the British magazine EUROMONEY conducts an expert poll, regarding the business reputation of countries world-wide. Out of 167 countries measured for their reliability, Belarus finished 145. War-torn Tajikistan placed just above Belarus.

The following republics of the former Soviet Union rated higher than Belarus for reliability: Latvia (104), Estonia (105), Lithuania (110), Turkmenistan (117), Uzbekistan (126), Kazakhstan (129), Kirgizstan (137) and Russia (138).

However, among the republics of the former Soviet Union, Belarus was not rated the lowest. Belarus finished above Moldova (148), Ukraine (149), Georgia (151), Azerbaijan (154) and Armenia (162). The countries thought to be the most unstable for business were the following: Somali (165), Afghanistan (166) and Cuba (167).

The governments of Belarus and Russia must solve the following math problem: what figure will be achieved by the monetary union of the two countries rated number 138 and 145?

"I no speak English. Go away"

Continued from page 1

Most visitors were undoubtedly aware that Belarus, like all ex-Soviet republics, has so far advanced only a relatively short distance along the road of economic reform. They did not expect Belarus to provide - like Slovenia - a champagne and music reception, nor personalized souvenirs, like the Hungarians with their laser-engraved portraits of visitors to the stand of the Budapest Technical University. They did, however, expect a basic welcome, a willingness to answer questions - and indeed, sufficient staff with the language skills to deal with such questions. And these, alas, were largely absent. Those wishing to know

more about the enterprises on show were all too often met with a bland "I no speak English and interpreter he busy". With the inevitable result - the baffled inquirer drifted away to where similar goods or services were on offer from the Poles or Lithuanians or Russians who did have enough English-speaking staff.

Furthermore, even if one did manage to secure the services of an interpreter - or happened, oneself, to speak Belarusian or Russian - one's inquiries often got a less-than-friendly answer. Several representatives of Belarusian industry seemed reluctant to divulge information about their firms or products. Certainly, they were more wel-

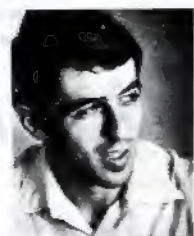
coming than the Central Asian who stuck his head through the curtains of his stand when visitors approached and bawled: "What do you want?" But if you take your goods to a trade fair, you cannot expect them to be treated as state secrets.

The small emerging private sector, represented by such firms as Neasy and Mena, were considerably friendlier and had no inhibitions about answering questions. Likewise, they had a better grasp of how to present their goods and services to the public. Neasy, in particular, had an extremely eye-catching display of a proposed marina development on lake Braslav, for which they

are seeking western investment. But again, several of those staffing the private-sector exhibits had only sufficient English to invite visitors "to take a seat please and wait for the interpreter".

Almost incredibly, at the end of the four-day exhibition, many exhibitors reported that they had made "serious contacts" likely to bear fruit in the future. Congratulations, however, must be tempered with the advice that, before venturing into the international marketplace next time, a course in English, and some advice on public relations would smooth matters considerably.

Chief banker versus beasts



In his traditional financial review, Alexander BURDA examines the recent downfall of the Belarusian ruble and predicts further exciting developments in June. Unfortunately, we are far too used to all sorts of unexpected occurrences on the foreign currency market.

On the last day of May the German currency unit spiraled upwards from BRB 12,400 to BRB 15,500 (an increase of 25%). The RUR remained stable (BRB 11.00) mainly due to the direct rouble intervention carried out by the National Bank of Belarus: the sale of RUR 5 bln prevented the upswing of the Russian rouble.

By most estimations the situation is likely to worsen with time. On June 23 Belarus will have its first presidential election. Unfortunately, before this event, the existing powers are not concerned with economic issues. Anyway, Stanislav Bogdankevich is at an impasse. He is doomed, if Kebich is triumphant. Bog-

dankevich has no other alternative but to enforce the immediate urgent steps towards the market economy. His quick push towards a market economy was illustrated on May 18 when the "rabbit" was made a legal tender throughout all of Belarus. If he is removed from his position with a Kebich victory, it will be a formidable task for conservatives to rescind his decisive actions. At this time, Bogdankevich must preserve his basis of respect and ward off offensive attacks launched by the brotherhood of the Council of Ministers. He is still counting on the miracle that Shushkevich will become the president-elect.

However, no miracle is likely to save the Belarusian currency. In June the dollar, DM and RUR are expected to go as high as BRB 30,000-35,000, BRB 18,000-20,000 and BRB 14.00-16.00, respectively. The future developments of the currency depend upon the action to be undertaken by the first President of Belarus. Yet alas, this inevitably will be the Premier Vyacheslav Kebich.

The efforts made by the National Bank to keep inflation in check at the Inter-Bank Exchange resulted in an amazing outcome. By mid-May for the first time in Belarusian

history the cash rate basically ended up being on a par with the clearing rate. This happened because more flexible ready-money was prepared in order to respond to the inflationary expectations, resulting from the Premier's pre-election drive. In June the gap of rates is likely to widen by 15-20%, unless the state chooses to meddle in exchange activities. By the end of the first summer month the cash dollar and RUR rates are predicted to amount to 25,000-28,000 and 12.00-13.00 "rabbits", respectively. This is what the monetary union looks like now.

Tenders at the Inter Bank Exchange in May

	3.05	5.05	12.05	17.05	19.05	24.05	26.05	31.05
USD	18,350	19,850	20,100	20,100	20,100	20,800	21,700	*
DM	11,100	11,850	12,010	12,010	12,010	12,400	12,400	15,500
RUR	10.0	10.8	10.9	10.7	10.7	10.7	11.0	11.0

* When the exchange rate reached BRB 24,000, the National Bank suspended and annulled the tenders.

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Lies, dam' lies and statistics



Deputy head of Minsk Municipal Statistical Department **Irena KANGRO** examines the ways statistical information is collected and processed. The uncompromising heading merely expresses a popular view of statistics.

For decades we were living in what we believed to be the wealthiest, the most prosperous and promising country in the world. Only recently did we wake up to face the grim reality with rising unemployment, burgeoning inflation, a huge budget deficit and an unpredictable future. Yet we live in the same country populated by the same people who work in the same factories and farms and, ironically, use the statistics inherited from the "society of mature socialism".

Despite the shedding of the command methods in the country's economy, its system of statistical reporting still remains a command one. The system is lagging far behind the rest of the world. Such progressive methods as sampling, extrapolation and systematic analysis are still hardly used. Operating as before, albeit without the all-powerful party committees to discipline any director who is too slow at handing in the required information, statisticians are experiencing a considerable undersupply of data. However, statistical departments are now free from pressure to distort or hide information.

If statistical authorities are to respond adequately to the changes in the economy they will have to give up their monopoly status and shed their command legacy. Otherwise any hopes of a major improvement in the quality of statistical data are futile.

STATE REGULATION OF STATISTICS

Belarus has no specific legislation on statistics. To statistical authorities paragraphs 93-95 of the 1991 Act on Economic Entities remain the only guidance.

Paragraph 93. Reporting by an economic entity to Statistical Authorities.

Economic entities are ob-

ligated to keep a record of their economic and financial activities and submit the relevant data to statistical authorities.

Paragraph 94. Submission of statistical data.

Statistical authorities will solely give the guidelines of statistical reporting and specify the data required and the timing and address of its submission. It is illegal to impose on entities an obligation to provide additional data unspecified by the legislation. Such data cannot be obtained but through agreement or any other lawful means.

Paragraph 95. Responsibility for withholding and distorting statistical information.

Anyone responsible for unlawfully distorting or withholding relevant statistical data shall face disciplinary and criminal action.

The draft law on statistics in Belarus which specified rights and responsibilities regarding statistical reporting was produced and submitted to Parliament for consideration in 1992. However, it did not survive the first reading and is currently being re-written.

THE STATISTICAL AUTHORITIES IN BELARUS

Belarusian statistical authorities form a hierarchy of four levels. At its foot lie the district statistical departments, one in each district. One level up are the municipal statistical departments which submit their statistical data to the regional statistical boards. At the top of the hierarchy is the State Committee for Statistics which has the status of a ministry and is accountable to the Government. The head of the State Committee for Statistics holds a ministerial position.

STATISTICAL REPORTING

Statistical categories.

All the relevant areas of statistics have been listed in the bulky publication called "A Summary of Statistics". The Minsk Municipal Statistical Department, for example, is responsible for collecting and processing data in such areas as industry, environment, transport and communications, scientific and technological advancement, prices, trade and services, family incomes etc. The State Committee for Statistics oversees the performance in agriculture and industry.

Statistical domains are further split into subdivisions. Industry for instance, is subdivided into light, food, forest and wood processing industries. In capital construction, entities act as either contractors (e.g. construction firms) or customers.

Every economic entity belongs to one specific statistical category but submits data in different areas. Although assigned to industry, the Minsk Lorry Factory also provides statistical reports on its capital construction, financing, labour and employment, etc.

Who provides the statistics?

It is the planning and accounting departments of economic entities that generally make reports to the statistical authorities. 400 sample families in Minsk provide information on family budgets by filling in monthly declarations of their incomes and expenses for a fee of 10% of the minimal wage, or BRB 6,000 (\$ 0.30) a month.

Where and when?

Different areas of statistics have different layouts of reports, each bearing a specific code of letters and figures. 1p, for instance stands for a financial report in for output and 5s for industrial expenses. Data are provided on a monthly, quarterly, semiannual or annual basis, depending on the statistics concerned and the category of the provider. A 1p form is filled in monthly, while a 5s report is handed in annually.

How reliable are the data?

In the old communist times statistics were sup-

posed to demonstrate the achievements of socialism, rather than adequately reflect the developments in the economy. The poor standards of today's statistics are largely due to the obsolete methods and poor training of the statisticians directly involved in collecting the data. Demographic, social and price statistics are generally viewed as "more reliable" than those dealing with trade and services. Here, there is a vested interest in covering up the information to avoid paying taxes and exposing activities in the shadow sector of the economy.

How reliable are the data?

Regular inspections by the State Committee for Statistics and the Minsk Municipal Statistical Department have revealed no deliberate efforts to hide or distort information, except that related to taxation.

Individuals are not held accountable for the information they provide. The current legislation merely mentions "legal action" against the offenders leaving its mechanism and the sanctions themselves unspecified.

How they provide information

For the most part, statistical reports (mostly handwritten) are taken to the Statistical departments by a courier. Sometimes, they are mailed or telexed in. The department has no fax number of its own. Instead, it is equipped with the IBM-286's and some less powerful lo-

cally produced computers. There are also a few huge but good-for-nothing machines taking up whole rooms, which were designed in the 1970s and still use punched cards.

The reports sent out by the Department to their subscribers are either typewritten or stencil-duplicated. It has no access to E-mail.

Secrets in statistics

As before, some areas of statistics still remain inaccessible to an average customer. Statistical reports by military factories are still classified as secret. The general public are only allowed access to information on the output of consumer goods at such factories and their social statistics.

Access to statistical information has nevertheless been made a lot easier, especially with the abolition of the "Official use only" classification, formerly born by many statistical reports.

WHAT DOES IT COST?

Statistical data in Belarus are free to the state authorities. Everyone else has to pay. The Minsk Statistical Department publishes monthly bulletins of statistics on different areas of Minsk's economy. Quarterly and semiannual bulletins are also available. At the end of every year the Department puts out an annual summary of statistical data.

Examples of the prices of statistical bulletins are as follows:

- Monthly statistical

summary of the output of consumer goods: BRB 4,400.

- Monthly summary of Minsk's industrial performance: BRB 3,000.

The Department will sell all kinds of specific and general statistical bulletins. Unpublished data are also available, in which case the charges will naturally be higher.

Theoretically, access to unclassified statistical information is unlimited. However, in practice, denials are quite possible. The decision to give or refuse access to statistical data is left to the discretion of the Head of the local statistical authority. Foreigners have no special limitations in getting access to statistics. At the moment, however, the only foreign organisation which regularly receives Belarusian statistical bulletins is the Ukrainian Embassy.

To obtain or order information customers have to write a formal request to the Head of the Minsk Statistical Department (Yanina P. Pasukevich) and wait for the reply.

Unlike many other countries, Belarus has no large-scale statistical publications. The statistics cited by the press are often very selective and inaccurate.

WHOM TO CONTACT

State Committee for Statistics, 12 Partisansky Pr. Minsk
Phone: 0172 495200 (Reception)
Fax: 0172 492204

Minsk Municipal Statistical Department 42 Zakharova St. Minsk
Phone: 0172 364415 (Reception)



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BELAVIA international flight schedule for summer 1994 (March 27 - September 25), Airport Minsk-2 (local time)

	Day of the week	Departure	Arrival	Flight No.
Minsk-Vienna	2,4,7	12.00	13.00	B2 899
Vienna-Minsk	2,4,7	13.55	16.55	B2 900
Minsk-Zurich	3,7	10.30	12.15	B2 869
Zurich-Minsk	3,7	13.15	17.00	B2 870
Minsk-Berlin	1,3,5	10.00	10.50	B2 891
Berlin-Minsk	1,3,5	11.50	14.35	B2 892
Minsk-Frankfurt	1,3	12.10	14.00	B2 893
Minsk-Frankfurt	5	11.45	13.35	B2 893
Frankfurt-Minsk	1,3	14.55	18.40	B2 894
Frankfurt-Minsk	5	14.35	18.20	B2 894
Minsk-Warsaw	2,6	12.30	12.50	B2 895
Minsk-Warsaw	3	11.00	11.20	B2 895
Warsaw-Minsk	2,6	13.50	16.10	B2 896
Warsaw-Minsk	3	12.20	14.40	B2 896
Minsk-Shannon	1,5	07.05	09.00	B2 897
Shannon-New-York	1,5	14.00	16.00	E1105
New-York-Shannon	6,4	18.45	08.45	E1104
Shannon-Minsk	1,5	10.30	16.00	B2 898
Minsk-Tel-Aviv	4,7	10.00	13.50	B2 1447
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Looking out the cinema window



Many of our readers who have not been around the MEN office for a cup of coffee may not know that we work inside the MIR cinema. Therefore, we have free admission to film shows and contacts with the charming director Mrs. Alla CHEPAK.

- How extensive is the cinema network in Minsk?

- There are 23 cinemas in Minsk. They are ranked into four categories depending upon their seating capacity, quality of services and state of repair. Although part of a systematised network of cinemas, each cinema has its own unique policies. For example, the PIONEER cinema focuses on films for the young people, while the SOVREMENNİK, KIEV, and RAKETA theatres specialise in erotic films. MIR is unique, because it is the only theatre that has the facilities to show films in stereo. Until recently all cinemas were subject to rigid supervision by the Central Videotape and Film Pool. However, a few years ago 10 of the cinemas were freed of this rigid supervision and are currently managed by the staff.

- Was the MIR cinema freed of this supervision also?

- Unfortunately, we were not among the lucky ten. The state authorities still supervise the cinema.

- What do you feel you are missing as a state-run cinema?

- We miss out on the independence which the ten "lucky" cinemas have. Unlike them, we do not have the authority to select freely our films, conclude agreements with the distributors and determine our staff wages. However, neither we nor the "lucky ten" have independence in regard of pricing. Admission fees are set by state authorities depending on the category of the cinema. Because state-run cinemas are deprived of the freedom to select and buy films, we are offered only four films by the Film Pool, if we have four films on our weekly plan - no more: no less. We have to show what we didn't choose.

- What does the cinema budget look like?

- On an average we show 15-17 films a month viewed by about 20,000 visitors. The ticket is currently priced at BRB 1500 for an ordinary show and 2,000 for a first night. Our total revenues in April amounted to BRB 35 mln. About a third is used to pay the royalties, another third is used to cover the maintenance costs and the remaining third, pays staff wages. We employ 31 people; their wages range from BRB 118,000 to BRB 387,000 a month. Occasionally, we give small bonuses.

- In the other words, the 31 people running a cinema in the very centre of the city get somewhere around \$1500 a month. Wouldn't it be more economical to rent the place?

- We do rent out some of our offices, which brings us an extra revenue of BRB 5 mln (\$250). However, we cannot carry this process too far for statutory and legal reasons. A cinema must remain a cinema.

- Has the cinema's repertoire gone through any changes?

- It has been entirely revised. Lenin used cinemas to proliferate communist ideology, hence, creating the vast quantity of ideological

films in the past few decades. Luckily, different kinds of films were created despite the system, making the Soviet cinema world-famous. With the collapse of the Soviet Union, the priorities of the art industry changed from weapon of ideological indoctrination to the medium of banal business. The new economy has shaken up the cinema. While ideology has left the screen, so has real art. The gap has been filled with low quality American films. Unlike most other European countries, we haven't yet realized the need to resist such "Americanisation".

- Do we have any moral barriers?

- Yes, we do. Before appearing on the screen, every film must be endorsed by the Film Supervision Board, which is responsible for the classification of new films. However, moral requirements become a lot less stringent in conditions of permanent scarcity.

- Does this mean that you are pessimistic about the future of cinema here?

- Not at all. I believe in happy endings. Most good films have it. Why should real life be any different?



By Roman YAKOVLEVSKY

For many of us the name of People's Deputy Alexander Lukashenko reminds us of the anti-corruption drive. During 1993 he headed the temporary Parliamentary Anti-Corruption Investigation Commission. In his sensational final report Alexander Lukashenko demanded that there be a legal claim against a large group of high-ranking officials. Recent political analysis represents him as one of the few presidential candidates that is a real contender.

Alexander Lukashenko was born on August 30, 1954 in Mogilev region, Belarus. His career is closely tied to Mogilev. Upon completion of secondary school in the region, he attended and graduated from the History Department at Mogilev Teachers' Training Institute. Lukashenko enlisted in the Army, serving two years as a border guard and then another two years, as an officer in motorised infantry. Following his military service, he worked as a deputy director at the Factory of Building Materials in his hometown of Shklov. Lukashenko worked there until 1987. After this, he became director of "Gorodets" State Farm. Prior to this presidential nomination, he has obtained higher economic education at the Agricultural Academy. As the director of the state farm, Lukashenko was elected a People's Deputy of the Belarusian Supreme Soviet in 1990. For the first time ever he caught the public eye with his painstaking and vigorous endeavours in forging a deputy faction called "Communists for Democracy". In 1993 Lukashenko came out in favour of denunciation of the Belavezhsky agreement which had proclaimed the Commonwealth of Independent States. While heading the Deputy Anti-Corruption Investigation Commission he tried to spruce up the image of independent politician.

The state authorities strongly accused Lukashenko of using the Commission as a means to increase his personal power base. The Commission was dubbed "A Deputy Emergency Committee". Incidentally, among Lukashenko's favourite political figures are Felix Dzerzhinsky, the founder of the Soviet secret police, and Yuri Andropov, the erstwhile boss of the Soviet KGB. In respect to Belarusian political figures, Lukashenko prefers the activities of Petr Masherov, the party leader of Belarus in Brezhnev's stagnation time.

Many observers hold that Lukashenko's jabs at the present administration have aptly been used by the adversaries of the ex-speaker Stanislav Shushkevich. Thanks to the main corruption-fighter to no small degree Shushkevich was outright sent to resignation by the pro-Governmental majority of the Supreme Soviet. The collection of signatures in support of the candidates in the coming elections has been completed in Belarus. As the law ordains, at least 100,000 people must sign up for a candidate giving him a pass mark. Alexander Lukashenko managed to gain as many as 160,000 votes. The Party of "Belaya Rus" Slavic Congress and the Union of Officers canvassed for him. These organizations like communists support the Premier Vyacheslav Kebich, who is known to advocate a monetary union between Belarus and Russia. Addressing the Russian Duma in May, Lukashenko called upon the MPs of Russia, Ukraine and Belarus to get together in the Belavezhskaia Puscha and proclaim a Slavic union of these three states. In his numerous interviews Lukashenko says that the Belarusian Premier needs the union with Russia only to have a grip on power. "He must go to prison", believes Lukashenko. Incidentally, his press-conference in the Russian State Duma Building would not happen if it was not for the courtesy extended to him by the Liberal and Democratic Party headed by Vladimir Zhirinovskiy.

Alexander Lukashenko has two sons. The elder one is training to be a diplomat at the Belarusian University; the younger one is still in school. His wife is the director of a kindergarten. Lukashenko's favourite colour is deep green. As for eating habits he prefers dairy products and brandy. He is keen on football, cars and political books.

The candidate's team is made up of young politicians. Many of them are People's Deputies. Valery Tsipkalo is an adviser to Alexander Lukashenko. He advocates the economic pattern of Hong Kong, Taiwan and South Korea. Lukashenko, himself, is opposed to a "landslide" privatisation and is not exactly enthusiastic about possible Western investments. The rumour is that some commercial structures involved in using Russian capital provide Lukashenko with some of his backing. However, the majority of big entrepreneurs treat him with great precaution.

Science and technology

By Rafail IGUESMAN

We continue to offer our readers a selection of short abstracts for newly invented gadgets, know-how and industrial samples. In our opinion, they are the most interesting recent technological advancements.

Today we are going to provide information on electric heaters with heat generating electric conductive film agents.

Here is one of the possible versions. The electric heater can consist of a metal case coated by a thin protective glass-fibre plastic. The top layer of the plastic carries a compositional resistive film element which is also covered by an air-tight glass insulating facing. The case, for instance, may be made of different types of carbonic steel or some other material.

Its shape can range from: a panel, a pipe, a tank to even more intricate configurations depending on the purpose of the heater. The heater may also be composed of the parts of equipment which requires heating. It can come without a case or have a resistive film element alone fully covered by a thin glass-fibre plastic or other air-tight protective matters. This happens when a low temperature of 50-80° C is required and no mechanical effort is exerted.

Mechanical durability and anti-rust performance are determined by the properties of case and protective coating.

Electric heaters with heat

generating electric conductive film agents can be applied in machine-building, medical chemistry, construction, food and light industry as well as agriculture.

After the information on electric heaters has been presented it would be logical to inform our readers of an original heating treatment used in machine-building.

A new method has been worked out in order to expand the application spectrum of surface and solid electric heating. An item that is to be heated is immersed in a metal vat which is then filled up with a electric conductive substance like a graphite powder. The casing of the vat and the item are connected to the positive and negative electric polarity. The heat is released mainly on the interface between the item and powder

which gives the item a contact surface heating. Such a reaction occurs due to a real resistance of the contact between the item and powder. If pressure is brought to the powder surface the latter gets compressed and, therefore, a contact resistance drops. The resistance of heated item becomes dominating in an electric circuit. Consequently, the heat will be released in the circuit itself.

While changing pressure on the graphite, it is possible to vary the surface-solid heating on a wide scale and, therefore, maintain a necessary heating treatment of any composite parts.

For further information on the items highlighted in this section, telephone the article's author at 0172/ 45 51 32.



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Restaurant adventure



Man cannot live on bread alone. However food is very important. The following article by our ANONYMOUS gourmand starts a special section for food lovers.

I've been living in the former Soviet Union myself now for the better part of three years, and so my circumstances may differ from those in which most foreigners may find themselves here. I've become accustomed to putting up with long queues and inferior and, more often than not, completely unappetising food which one might find on the shop shelf. I've also learned to be creative in my own kitchen, and for the most part do not even miss all the microwavable goodies we are all used to in the West.

But, as I observe, my situation is not typical. Most Westerners living in this part of the world are here for shorter periods, sometimes just a matter of days or weeks, and simply do not have the opportunity or are not compelled (understandably) to adjust to these conditions. But eat they must.

As most readers are undoubtedly aware, the Soviet Union was never a diner's paradise. In fact, little has changed in the way of restaurant service in Minsk since those days (as opposed to Moscow, where prices and, to a lesser degree service, have caught up with the West.) Most of the establishments in Minsk still serve you as if THEY are doing YOU a FAVOUR. Now, one cannot expect changes overnight, but being treated in a restaurant as if you are imposing has the effect of making the best-

cooked meal seem like a rubber door-mat. Most of the time, this is just about the starting point in any case. Greasy, fried and virtually unrecognisable "cuts" of meat with a spoonful of beetroot and a couple of slices of stale bread are hardly what anyone would call gourmet.

But gradually, the scene is thankfully changing. More and more restaurants are being privatised, and a fair number of new places have opened recently in Minsk to augment their number. The editorial staff of MEN has decided the time has come to initiate a restaurant-review column to keep readers informed of what's in store for them when they venture out (as most undoubtedly do) into the wild and rapidly changing world of Minsk Cuisine.

In this column, your author, whose identity will remain anonymous to protect him from possible reprisals from disgruntled restaurateurs, will give you first-hand reports on which places to visit and which to avoid. Restaurants will be rated on the following criteria: location; atmosphere; service; clientele (Mafiosi-content); prices; and, of course, prices.

The subject of our first column is the NOSTALGIA restaurant, located at 43 Ivanovskaya St. (phone: 36 04 48), just a few blocks from Victory Square in the centre of town. NOSTALGIA was opened just a few months ago, just before the new year.

The place is quiet and attracts a certain class of clients. The manager informed us that in the six months the restaurant has been opened not one incident has occurred, and not once have the police been called. This would be nothing extraordinary for an establishment in the West, but here it says a lot.

This restaurant is not the easiest to find, and if you didn't know it was there, you probably wouldn't suspect that behind the wooden doors lies a quiet and cosy little "kabak". There is little in the way of signposts to mark its location. This may be a plus, keeping the place quiet and peaceful. Getting there is not an easy task if you don't have a car. One can always take a taxi, however. Public transport in this case is really not an option I would choose.

The interior is warm and inviting. The tables and booths are somewhat unusual perhaps: high-backed sofas and rather ordinary tables and chairs. But all in all, the atmosphere and interior would meet with the satisfaction of the most discriminating diner. I visited NOSTALGIA in the late afternoon, and the place was virtually empty. Of the 20 or so tables in the restaurant, perhaps five were occupied. The scene was quiet, and the music a tasteful selection of recent AOR calibre at a volume level which actually allowed my companion and me to carry on a normal conversation. I was assured later during my discussion with the manager that the music is never played at ear-blasting volumes. In the evenings, live artists perform their original works on a small stage by the wall in the centre of the dining hall.

The menu is quite extensive, and one can choose from a variety of starters, including traditional Russian-style

salads as well as some dishes which I have never encountered. I assume they are the original creations of the chef, to whom I give my compliments. Quite a number of main courses are also available: I had the Fillet-Milan while my dining companion opted for the breaded pork-chop. The only thing lacking from the menu was a decent selection of soups which was on the whole satisfactory. As we observed and were later told by the manager, a client is welcome to request dishes that are not on the menu. A gentleman at the next table, for instance, was enjoying a plateful of "draniki", a traditional Belarusian potato-cutlet (there's no accounting for taste, I suppose.)

My companion and I were treated with the utmost respect by the staff at NOSTALGIA. The waiter who served us was friendly and helpful, and made no fuss when we asked for a couple of extra minutes to decide on our choice of meals. He observed customary etiquette, and we were left satisfied.

Best of all, the prices were extremely affordable. We paid a total of 360.00 roubles for two, half of which was for the king prawns which my dining companion ordered for himself. Judging from the menu, if one refrains from ordering bottles upon bottles of spirits, one can easily dine for the equivalent of five dollars and leave quite satisfied. Reservations are not ordinarily taken, with an exception made for regular guests.

I was on the whole very impressed by my experience at NOSTALGIA. I rate it as one of the best restaurants I've visited in my seven months in Minsk, and plan to visit again. NOSTALGIA receives a big thumbs-up.

Business and education: partnership program

The national competition «Education leaders 94»

General provisions

1. The competition is held among the teams that have succeeded in developing Belarus schools. Each team consists of a school leader, a representative of the local government and a businessman.

2. The competition is organized by the Educational Centre for Leadership Development and the Institute for Educational Administration of the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Belarus.

3. The competition is sponsored by the Institute for Local Government and Public Service/Open Society Institute.

The aims of the competition

- to draw the attention of the government, politicians, educators, possible sponsors and general public to the problems of leadership development as a bridge to innovations in the educational system of Belarus;

- to enhance the educational leaders' status and prestige in society, to motivate the talented educators to pursue the leadership and administrative paths;

- to disseminate the effective experience of partnership between educational bodies, local government and business leaders in developing Belarus schools.

Competition stages

1. Preparatory stage (May-August, 1994).

The organizing committee forms the national and regional juries, considers the applications and provides consultations on the criteria and mechanism of the competition.

11. Regional stage (September-November, 1994).

The competition is held throughout Belarus. The participants will be asked to assess the effectiveness of their school using "The Guidelines" developed by the Educational Centre for Leadership Development and a set of questionnaires which measure to what degree the interests and needs of students, teachers, parents and community are met.

The system of leadership activities that has led to the success is to be described and reported to the jury along with the school development plan for the next year.

After studying the submitted data the jury selectively tests their verisimilitude and then names three teams to participate in a TV show. Representatives of the regional community will be invited to the show to question the participants and together with the jury to select the regional winner.

The Third Stage - the National Final "Educational Leaders 94" will take place in Minsk (December - January, 1994).

The show on the Belarus TV will involve the national jury as well as students, teachers, parents, local government authorities, politicians, businessmen and other people - those who prepare the most interesting questions to the participants.

Participants of the competition

The teams, each consisting of one school leader, one representative of local government and one businessman, are welcomed to take part in the competition. The initiative to make a team and to apply to the Organizing Committee could come from any of the listed representatives.

Competition awards

The winner will be awarded the rouble equivalent of \$300 US sponsored by the Institute for Local Government and Public Service/Open Society Institute. The jury expects additional prizes for the participants from local and foreign companies interested in supporting educational leadership development in Belarus.

Organizing committee
"EDUCATIONAL LEADERS 94"
8 Ulyanovskaya st. Minsk
BELARUS. 220600
Tel: 270298. Fax: 347129
E-mail: isaglas.apc.org

* It is planned that annual winners will meet in 1999 to compete at the SUPER-FINALE "LEADERS OF THE XXI CENTURY" and the winner of the super-finance will represent the Republic of Belarus in Hannover, Germany at the exhibition "EXPO-2000" (the project is being developed with IMTEC).

Local events

June 6 - 25. Institute for Further Training of Teachers Department of Secondary and Junior Education.

Lectures on environmental education and health-conscious behaviour with an overview of statistics on children's health in Belarus.
Tel 261577

June 7. Belarusian Cultural Centre
Congress of Belarusian Lawyers.
Tel 275624

June 14. Belarusian Academy of Science. Meeting with World War 2 Veterans to mark the 50th anniversary of the liberation of Belarus.
Tel 395467

June 15-16. Minsk Linguistic University. Belarusian Conference on Computer Programmes in Language Teaching.
Tel 332156



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THE REPORT ON THE REPUBLICAN BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION

has been endorsed by the Soviet of Ministers and submitted to the Supreme Soviet. According to the report, the revenues constituted BRB 2.1 trillion and the expenditures reached 2.5 trillion.

RESIDENCY OF THE PRESIDENT OF BELARUS

according to the proposition made by the Council of Ministers will presumably be located in the House of Government.

ice contracts is concerned, 30% of the polled officers were against it, 34% of them failed to give any definite answer, and 36% of them were positively disposed towards it as long as the government fulfills all of its promises.

PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE ALEXANDER LUKASHENKO

was in a car accident on June 2. He was on his way to Grodno when the rear wheel of his car broke off at a speed of 100 km/h. Lukashenko was not injured. According to his press-secretary Vladimir Nestiuk, the accident was not accidental. The car had been thoroughly inspected before the journey.

MUNICIPAL PROPERTY PIECES

liable to privatisation could be bought for vouchers for the first time at the open auction, held in Grodno. A shop, a cafe, two uncompleted construction projects, four buildings, four flats and a plot of land for a bistro cafe were put up for auction.

33 MILLION BRB WORTH OF EQUIPMENT

was stolen from the headquarters of BELAGROPROMBANK. The burglars broke into the study of the Chairman of the Board and the personnel department office. They stole two computers, a VCR, a telephone and a coping machine. The robbery was fairly easy job because neither the study nor the office had anti-burglar alarm systems.

A WAVE OF VANDALISM

has hit the Jewish cemeteries recently. The Association of Jewish organisations and communities is deeply concerned by the inability of Law enforcement bodies to find those who profaned Jewish graves in Bobruysk, Mogilev, Borisov and Gomel. These barbaric acts were described by the Association as an attempt to undermine political stability in the republic.

A TEAM OF INDEPENDENT OBSERVERS

is to arrive in Belarus at the request of the Central Electoral Commission. 300 official invitations have been sent out to the members of the European Community.

BREST EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE HAS INTRODUCED

an environmental fee, effective June 1. At the border each bus will be charged 10 times the minimum governmental wage, a minibus or a lorry will be charged 3 times the minimum governmental wage and a car will be charged the minimum wage. People traveling by rail or by bus will have to pay 1/3 of the minimum wage. People attending funerals or children travelling to rest institutions will be given special privileges. Privileges will also be given in certain other cases.

FIBRE-OPTIC COMMUNICATION LINES

are to be laid in two directions: Minsk-Gomel-Ukrainian border and Minsk-Brest-Polish border. All regional centres of Belarus will also be linked

up. The Lines' total length is 840 km. The project will improve the Belarusian communication system and decrease its costs. Belarus has received a 30.4 mln loan from the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development to cover the project cost. A company, whose offer fulfills the demands of the Bank, will receive the contract.

MINSK IN YOUR POCKET

is the title of the first English language guide book of Minsk published by "VIYP" publishing house based in Vilnius. The book lists maps and



On May 22 - 29 Minsk was the venue for the 'From Confrontation to Cooperation' conference. The event was called by the 'Life after Chernobyl' fund and the German Society for Adult Education. The German participants of the conference have visited the Khatyn memorial and Begomle War Museum

ONE MILLION PEOPLE MAY LOSE THEIR JOBS

by the end of this year. This pessimistic forecast has made the Business Support Fund take an active part in the State Employment Program. The Fund intends to give loans to the unemployed for the start-up of private businesses.

A DELEGATION FROM THE US ARMY

European command headquarters has arrived in Belarus within the framework of the "Military to Military" program. The US servicemen visited the Minsk Military Command College, 120th division and 72nd training centre.

A NATIONAL HOLIDAY OF THE REPUBLIC OF ITALY

was celebrated on June 2 at the Friendship Society in Minsk. The meeting was attended by representatives from the various embassies as well as government officials and the local intelligentsia. The Italian Ambassador Mr Gian Luca Bertinetto welcomed the guests. A small concert was arranged by the Italian cultural attaché, Mr Osvaldo Leuzzi.

plane, train and bus schedules. It also describes hotels, cafes, and restaurants. The presentation of the guide book took place in the cozy, newly opened restaurant "Moravia" on June 3rd.

THE MEETING

dedicated to the centenary of Haim Sutin, an outstanding Belarusian and French artist, has taken place in the Belarusian State Museum. Both the cultural attaché from the Israeli Embassy, Mr Glasman, and from the French Embassy, Mr Tolstoi, attended the event. Painters and art critics from the Belarusian Academy of Culture and the Arts Museum discussed the life and work of the artist.

DRUG ADDICTION IS BECOMING A GRAVE PROBLEM

for the law enforcement bodies of Belarus. According to the data provided by the Ministry of Internal Affairs, there has been an 4.5 times increase in the number of crimes connected with drugs over the last five years. In one year, 1992-1993, the number of crimes increased from 1401 to 777. In 1992 more than 19,000 sq. m. of illegal crops of wild hemp and poppy found in Belarus and moreover, 6,000 sq. m. of these crops were found on unused farm land.

Information compiled from Belarusian newspaper and information agency RID sources.



Belarusian Parliament Speaker Mechaslav Gryb has attended the opening of the CONSUMEXPO'94 exhibition of Polish consumer products and foodstuff.

REGULATION ON CONSTITUTIONAL COURT

consisting of 100 articles been approved. Under the regulation the court will be staffed with 53 employees. According to the court chairman, Valerie Tikhinya, its sessions will be open to the public.

THE WORLD BANK

has granted the Republic of Belarus a 41.9 million loan for the development of its forestry at a 7.27% interest rate. Credit pigments period is 15 years. The interest will not be charged during the first five years.

BRITISH MILITARY AWARDS

have been given by the British Ambassador in Belarus, John Everard, to Vladimir Palto and Ivan Bulgak. They served in the Polish Army under British command during WW II. The British Military Attaché in Moscow, Lieutenant-General of the Air Force Wilkinson, participated in the ceremony.

BRB 40 BILLION

was spent on the conversion of Belarusian enterprises in 1993, which included 7.4 bln BRB allocated from the state budget.

THE PUBLIC OPINION POLL

surveying the officers at the Minsk Engineering Military College revealed that 52% of them saw no future in military service. To other questions, 25% of them responded that they would soon leave the army, 46% of them responded that they were dissatisfied with the legal status and standards of living, and 67% of them responded that they do not have their own living accommodations. On the whole, they stated that the government must alter its military agenda or the future of the Belarusian army is doomed. As far as the introduction of military serv-

A MUNICIPAL PROPERTY AUCTION HAS TAKEN PLACE

in Molodechno. The cooperation between the Western Real Estate Exchange and Molodechno Business Centre made it possible. The 5 auctioned projects were sold. Their initial price went up by 10 times and reached BRB 1.4 billion. These are the biggest proceeds up to now.

IN MAY GROSS MILK PRODUCTION

in Belarus dropped 231,940 tons or 94.8% of the last year production level. Milk yield per cow averaged at 157,65 kg: 4,450 kg less than the previous year. There was a considerable decline, 18%, in the quantity of milk purchased by the state. The quantity of milk brought from the individuals shrank by 50%.

FIRST CONGRESS OF EXPATRIATES

has taken place in Grodno. It was organised by the Union of Poles in Belarus.



The second Belarusian Song Festival recently opened in Minsk. The opening ceremony was visited by the Mayor of Molodechno Gennady Karpenko. The festival is due to take place in Molodechno.

Minsk Economic News

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Concert Hall

- June 14. "Farewell to 20th Century": Folk concert. Khoroshki folk group.
June 19. Quo Vadis 2000: Gleb Uspensky. Belarusian State Symphony Orchestra.
June 21. State Symphony Orchestra of Belarusian Radio and Television. Symphony N3, 'To my mother': Wagner. Concerto in B minor. Grieg. Michelle Batisto (piano). Conductor Anatoly Lapunov.
June 23. Organ Music Concert. Toccata and Fugue in D minor. Bach. Selections from French composers. Sergey Tsatsorin (organ).

Chamber Hall

- June 9-10. Organ Duet. Selections from Bach, Handel, Mozart, Albinoni, and others. Ludmila Laruk, Vitaly Pivnov.
June 18. 'Composer Backgrounds' series. Selections from Brahms and Mendelssohn. Konstantin Sharov (organ). Presented by Olga Savitskaya.
June 20. Piano Music Concert. Sonata in C minor. List. 'Miroirs': Ravel. Pieces from Goyekas suite: Granados. Sonata N2, op. 22: Ginastera.
June 21. 'Syrinx' flute ensemble, international competition winner. Pieces by Bach, Vivaldi, Debussy, Peterson, Joplin, Lysenko, Savelliev, Svetlanov.
June 25. 'Composer Backgrounds' series. Pieces by Saint Saens, Frank. Konstantin Sharov (organ). Presented by Olga Savitskaya.
June 28. Chamber Music Concert. Sonata in E minor for violin and piano K. 304: Mozart. Sonata for violin and piano: Frank. Heinrich Fuhks (violin), Igor Alovnikov (piano).

BELARUS BOLSHOI

- June 8. Corsar: Adan.
June 9. Mozart and Salieri: Rimsky-Korsakov. Sheherazade: Rimsky-Korsakov. Carmina Burana: Orff. Carmen-Suite: Bizet - Shchedrin.
June 10. Evgeny Onegin: Tchaikovsky. Evgeny Onegin: Tchaikovsky.
June 14. Aide: Verdi.
June 16. Iolanthe: Tchaikovsky.
June 17. Swan Lake: Tchaikovsky.
June 18. Magic Flute: Mozart.
June 19. Cippolino: Khachaturian (matinee). Nutcracker: Tchaikovsky (soiree).
June 21. Creation of the World: Petrov.
June 22. Sleeping Beauty: Tchaikovsky.
June 23. Madama Butterfly: Puccini.
June 25. Spartak: Khachaturian.
June 26. Don Quixote: Minkus (matinee). Carmina burana: Orff, Carmen Suite: Bizet, Shchedrin (soiree).

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Vitebsk's tribute to Chagall

By Irena METLITSKAYA

Marc Chagall had fond memories of Vitebsk, his birthplace. He wrote, "I haven't seen or heard from my hometown, a place so dear to me, for many long years. Like a lone wanderer I've carried its image through all my life in my pictures. There hasn't been a single one that didn't speak of its joy and sorrow."

Finally on June 15 the spirit of Marc Chagall and Vitebsk will be united once again at the First International Marc Chagall Open Air Festival. On June 15 artists from Germany, Poland, Israel, the United States, Russia, France, Italy, Turkey, Greece and, of course, Belarus will gather to work in Vitebsk for over one month.

On July 1 the exhibit of their work will be open to the public. In addition, to their novel work, the public will also enjoy the paintings by Marc Chagall and Jehudi Pan, the retrospective display of Vitebsk School paintings for the last 75 years, and a presentation by a Belarusian artist.

There will also be a musical component to the festival. Also beginning on July 1 Yuri Bashmet's orchestra will start the festival of music called "The Violin of Chagall". Then, on July 6 there will be an evening performance of the oratorio to the lyrics of Marc Chagall composed especially for the occasion by the French composer M. Bleuse. Mr Bleuse has agreed to come to Vitebsk to conduct the orchestra.